

AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENING WCC 25th Anniversary-cum-Fundraising Dinner

Over 600 people
attended

Over RM 388 000
RAISED!

Brilliant
Performances!



Past presidents and VIPs cutting WCC's 25th Anniversary birthday cake.

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WCC's Vision & Mission

On 2 September, WCC key members and staff got together to finalise the vision and mission statements of the organisation. These important statements reflect who we are and the work we do in the past, today and the future.

VISION

WCC envisions an inclusive society free from gender violence and discrimination, and where women can actualize their full potential

MISSION

WCC is committed to:

- Eliminating violence against women and children
- Empowering women and children, and
- Promoting gender equality and social justice

SERVICE UPDATE

Tamil Speaking Women's Workshop



"I'm glad my friend invited me to come for this workshop. Now I feel I have new strength and I'm not afraid any more." said one of the participant.

The WCC and PPW Tamil workshop, *Learning About Your Rights* took place on 6-7 August at St Anne's Church in Bukit Mertajam. The workshop, sponsored by the Penang Women, Family and Community Development Committee and EED, aimed at expanding the level of awareness and understanding of domestic violence (DV) and gender issues targeted the lower-income and single mothers: 15 women attended.

The programme began on a Friday evening with Jayamalar Samuel, WCC member, conducting a session on *Gender in Tamil*. Jaya's session was both hilarious and challenging as she

pressed home the points on stereotypical behaviour. She cited the example of coy behaviour expected of a bride-to-be during the Indian "merisik", and the participants fell about laughing, demonstrating how each of us in one way or another, has either accepted gender stereotypical behaviour or even encouraged such behaviour. She also explained how the power differential created by the gender stereotypes is linked to violence against women.

The following morning, Jennie Anthonisamy, PPW Project Officer, gave her inaugural talk on domestic violence, linking it with gender inequality and also furnished examples. Using picture cards of women in different DV situations, the participants considered why some women remain in abusive situations. Most agreed that culture, religion, lack of self-confidence, poor finance, and ignorance of their rights were the main reasons for staying. Mangleswary Subramaniam, WCC Project Officer then explained the process and procedures through which abused victims could access help.

The participants continued to discuss issues faced by Indian

women and list the sources of problems and possible solutions. Prema Devaraj, WCC Programme Director, assisted by Jennie, led the session and also gave hand outs on available resources.



The session continued with a movie "Karuthamma", which revolved around the issues of female infanticide, domestic violence, poverty, and women as second class citizens, was chosen for viewing. Lalitha Menon, WCC President, was also present and while many said they had watched the movie before, this viewing had them opened up a wider dimension and different perspective on gender and DV.

The participants' parting words were "Not only did WCC give us good food for our stomachs but also food for thoughts."

Lecture on Violence Against Women

From July till September, a series of lectures was held at the Penang Medical College (PMC) and Adventist Nursing College. Annie Yeap, WCC Service Coordinator, conducted lectures at PMC on 16 July, 6 August, and 23 September and one at the Adventist Nursing College on 17 August. 80 students attended these lectures.

Annie started with an introduction to WCC as most are unaware of WCC's services. They were impressed by the work we do and felt they should be kept abreast of the services WCC offers such as counselling and shelter for abused women.

At PMC, participants discussed the gender characteristics of men and women. This activity made them aware of the personal prejudices and media influences which affect their perception of gender roles in society. At the Nursing College, they discussed a case study on domestic violence to help them understand the various types of violence and their impact on women.



Women's Support Group

PPW's Women's Support Group held another two sessions for single mothers and abused women in June and August.

On 19 June, PPW pampered these women by arranging two resource persons to teach them the basic skills of pedicure and facial make-up. The women thoroughly enjoyed this experience and marvelled at the change following their make-over. They talked about the importance of self-care and a positive lifestyle as they struggled to take care of their children.

These support group activities have offered a valuable space for single mothers to meet and build friendships. Women who experience the "Suddenly, I'm a Single Mum" syndrome can take comfort knowing they are not alone and there are others willing to share their experiences and support them emotionally, thus empowering themselves.

Divorced women often experience self-doubt, fear, and confusion coping with their new role. In addition to their own emotional turmoil, they also need to deal with the emotional effects of the divorce suffered by their children such as feelings of abandonment, fears that neither parent really wants them, worry that they are the cause of the divorce, and anxiety when they have to spend time separately with either parent.

So on 14 August, PPW invited Madam Chan Joon Mooi, mother of three, to provide tips in handling children's emotions. The session attracted 20 single or divorced mothers shouldering the responsibility for their children's emotional well-being and assuming the fathering role too. This simple and practical session showed the participants a different way to view themselves as single mothers and how they might handle their children better.



Ilmu Keluarga

A workshop on "Ilmu Keluarga" was held on 10 July at the BM Country Club, Bukit Mertajam. It was a collaboration between WCC, PPW and Lembaga Penduduk Pembangunan Keluarga Negara (LPPKN) and sponsored by MMK Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga dan Komuniti Pulau Pinang and EED. Over fifty participants, mostly single mothers and lower-income women attended.

Despite their ethnic differences, the participants bonded well and enjoyed discussing issues on parenting and stress management. The brainstorming session ignited much creativities and laughters and a joyful atmosphere prevailed throughout the day.

The workshop objective was to increase parenting skills among the lower-income groups and single mothers; feedback was positive. Our special thanks to the LPPKN facilitators who presented a lively session by injecting interesting pictures and video into their presentation. Staff, Annie Yeap, Swee Li, Jennie together with PPW intern Addie Lim and volunteer Meyuri Michelle coordinated the workshop.



OUTREACH UPDATE

Workshop on “Know Your Rights”

On 10 July, Praise Lutheran Centre, Bukit Mertajam invited WCC to conduct a “Know your Rights” workshop in Tamil. The workshop aimed at creating awareness on how gender inequality leads to violence against women and where help is available to protect their rights. 24 participants mostly from lower-income group attended.

WCC staff, Mangles led the first exercise on *Gender* where the participants differentiated between sex and gender. It was hard work coaxing them to discuss biological differences, as many felt embarrassed to mention the private parts of men and women. They were also asked to reflect and discuss the changes in gender roles over time.

The session continued with Sudandara, WCC Treasurer, speaking on how gender power differential can lead to violence against women. Participants shared common problems such as financial, lack of knowledge, parenting skills and enthusiastically discussed possible ways to improve the situation.

One of the male participants commented that rape occurs because of the way women dressed, “Women are aroused by touch and men are aroused by sight”. Prema explained that rape does not occur because of one’s attire but because of the issues of power and control and gave examples.

This workshop was clearly a success because many of the women spoke up and had participated enthusiastically, happy that they had been given a chance to learn, question, apply their knowledge, and present their thoughts. The session ended with the ‘Cat and Mouse’ game which had the participants and WCC staff running for their lives and laughing in delight!



Gender Session at Surya College

Surya College in Butterworth agreed to WCC's request to run a session on Gender Sensitisation on 17 September. The aim of this initiative was to get participants to examine commonly held views on how the opposite sex behave in relationships as well as encourage them to look at the impact of such views on behaviour in relationships.

The session started poorly as the students were noisy and did not pay attention to the facilitators but things improved after the ice-breaking session led by part-time Project Officer, Thomas Michal. Tasha Merican, Programme Officer, then took over with ‘Alien Game’ which involved active discussion and interaction and the students were able to give good feedback on the differences between a man and woman.

Most students were able to break out from the stereotypes to conclude that men and women deserve mutual respect. Thomas went on to talk about the link between gender stereotyping, violence against woman and the reasons men abuse women. We thank Mr Ramadasen R for liaising with the college and arranging the talk. The college have invited us to return for two more sessions before end of the year.

Working with teenagers on "Respek"

WCC staff Prema and Nadia, travelled to Ipoh for a two-day training on "Working with Teenagers" organised by Perak Women for Women (PWW) on 24- 25 July. The training, held at the PWW's office, was attended by 32 participants from various organisations including nine representatives from the Rotary Club, Kuala Lumpur. The training aimed to teach facilitators how to conduct the *Respek* programme for youth.

On the first day, they learnt about the differences between sex and gender and myths about sexual violence. They were also taught how to conduct activities such as *Circle of Friends*, *What I Think About You* and watched short videos from the *Membina Perhubungan Mesra (MPM) VCD*.

The second day started with group discussions on case studies. Participants were asked to analyse newspaper cuttings on rape and sexual assault. This

activity taught them to see how misplaced trust contributed to sexual assaults and helped them consider how they might communicate personal safety and precautionary issues to teenagers.

An interesting discussion was sparked off when one of the participants remarked that "teenage girls should not be allowed to go out to shopping complexes because it will put them at risk" but another countered that it was not a good idea to keep teenagers at home because there are risks everywhere, even at home, e.g teenagers can now access pornographic sites or receive explicit SMS messages. The participants concluded that the best way to help teenagers is to trust and nurture good communications especially with parents and teachers.

Feedback indicated that most felt that they learnt a great deal from the training and that the

RESPEK programme was highly relevant to the problems faced by youths today. More than 90% of the participants were willing to conduct this programme on their own.



Workshop at Holy Spirit Church

The WCC team comprising staff and volunteers (Prema, Tasha, Nadia, Mangles, Lerk Shih, Naweed, Joseph and Lim) presented a two-hour session on *Teenage Relationships* to 56 youths from the Holy Spirit Cathedral on 3 July.

The teenagers watched and then analysed the WCC VCD clip, *Aku Ada Date*, and went on to discuss case studies of situations where teenagers find themselves in risky situations or faced sexual exploitation. There was much discussion and laughter at some of the suggestions for solving problems. They were a lively bunch and relished both the programme and games. The WCC team was given a blessing and rousing send-off at the end of the afternoon. What a joy to work with such an energetic group of teenagers – it kept us on our toes!

Seminar on Dv & csa

On 8 July, WCC was invited by the Penang Health Department to speak on two segments: domestic violence (DV) and child sexual abuse (CSA) in Malay. 300 participants from government agencies, secondary schools and the Teluk Bahang community attended this seminar.

Besides WCC staff, the speakers included Dr Elizabeth Anthony from the Penang Hospital, ASP Faridah Shariff from Police Station Barat Daya and Salmah Bee from the Komtar Welfare Department who presented on the issues, statistics and procedures for handling cases and how different agencies work together in support of victims.

Tasha who presented the CSA talk actively engaged the audience on the impact of sexual abuse on a child. Sook Foong then spoke briefly on DV, focusing on examples of the cycle of violence and gave real life examples. During the panel discussion, the participants had many questions to ask of all the speakers.

We thanked Dr Azizah Ab. Manan and her team for inviting us and introducing to Dr Mohamed Iqbal Hamzah, the officer in charge of running programmes at the Health Department, so that we could network with his department to conduct more programmes in the future.

Perlakuan Remaja

Perlakuan Remaja is a programme which focuses specifically on the inappropriate behaviours of boys. Thomas conducted the programme in three different schools, namely SMK St. Mark, Butterworth, SMK Vokasional, Balik Pulau and SMK Georgetown, Batu Lanchang during July and August. 165 boys ages 13 to 17 benefited from the programme.

Thomas began the session with a quiz aimed at helping the boys understand sexual harassment. They were shown a short video clip and Thomas then role-played with the students to help them understand how a victim of sexual harassment might feel. Thomas noticed that although the Form 1 boys were just thirteen, they were mature in their thinking and realised that 'Girls also have dignity and need to be respected'.



Personal Safety at SMK Teknik

The outreach team was invited to SMK Teknik Balik Pulau on 26 July to conduct a personal safety programme to 73 Form 4 students. Tasha, Mangles and Jennie presented the *Mabuk Cinta* session to 53 female students while Thomas conducted the *Perlakuan Remaja* session for 20 male students.

Mabuk Cinta features a classroom romance between Siti and Johari and how their relationship develops. Jennie, who led the session for the first time, felt understandably excited and nervous but the students were attentive and responded enthusiastically. Mangles continued with a session on how ICT can lead to violence against women. Tasha concluded by pointing out that despite all the precautions they might take, it may still not be possible to prevent a sexual assault from taking place. She stressed that the victim was not to be blamed and that the perpetrator must be held responsible for his action.

Personal Safety at SMJK Chung Hwa

On 22 September, WCC was invited by the SMJK Chung Hwa to give a personal safety talk on sexual assault to 75 Form One female students. Annie was assisted by volunteers, Kae Shih and Lee Y'ng. Her talk covered issues of rape, domestic violence, and sexual harassment. She went on to talk about a number of the teenage relationship cases she had encountered. A few of the participants were able to talk about the problems they faced but most were too shy to speak. The school discipline teacher observing the session took the opportunity to advise the students not to engage in unhealthy relationships with boys and to prioritise and focus on their studies instead.



Circle of Friendship and Misplaced Trust

Many of the secondary schools these days realised that teenage boys and girls are engaging in intimate relationships at a much earlier age. Therefore, a number of schools have invited WCC to run programmes for their teenage students. *Circle of Friendship* and *Misplaced Trust* are two activities in the WCC manual *Respek* which address the issues of friends and how to treat friendships more cautiously.

The *Circle of Friendship* activity helps young people to understand positive characteristics of a friend and differences between close friends and acquaintances. *Misplaced Trust* helps participants identify the situation where misplaced trust can lead to sexual assault.

On 10 August, WCC staff Tasha, Mangles and Nadia, and volunteer, Lerk Shih, conducted the session in SMK Georgetown for fifty Form 1 girls. The students were responsive and had many questions. The teacher present remarked that she too found the session helpful and relevant to the school, as most

teachers lack the knowledge and skills to talk to students about such issues.

The school invited WCC on 23 August to present another similar session to their Chinese students. Fifteen 13-year old girls attended. WCC volunteer Tang Kae Shih encouraged the students to speak about their own experiences and problems faced by their friends and also gave some safety tips for getting out of a risky situation.

On 24 August, WCC was invited by school SMK Convent Butterworth to conduct a similar session to sixty-five Form Two girls. The facilitators pointed out that trust is crucial in any close relationship and that close friendships take time to develop. They explained that in many cases of rape or sexual assault, the victims had unwittingly placed their trust in people they regarded as friends. The students gave their full attention and interact actively when questions were asked.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Prevention Programme

A Rotary Project To Build Communities....Bridge Continents



On 28 and 29 August, Prema conducted the first two-day training for 26 participants at The Club, Bukit Utama, Petaling Jaya. They were shown the basics of giving a talk on child sexual abuse, and given tips on public speaking and Powerpoint presentations and then given the opportunity to practise what they had learnt. On the second day, Prema conducted the *Ok Tak Ok* programme with 10 children from a welfare home as a demonstration on how to work with children and the different skills required.

This year WCC partnered with six Rotary clubs (Bandar Utama, Titiwangsa, Shah Alam, Metro Kuala Lumpur (KL), KL North and Sungei Way) to provide four two-day training workshops over a period of a year, showing facilitators how to give talks on the issue of child sexual abuse. The aim of the project was to create a critical mass of adult facilitators across the country (beginning in Selangor) in a bid to create a safe and nurturing environment where children can live wholesome lives free from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Prema Devaraj, WCC Programme Director, was in KL on 4 August for the launch of the project. She spoke briefly about the importance of raising the awareness of both adults and children on personal safety. The launch was well attended by the Rotarians and covered in *The Sun* paper the next day.

The participants gave positive feedback and most were confident they would manage with a bit more practice. All purchased the *Bijak Itu Selamat* package and received a Powerpoint presentation they could use as well as additional notes from WCC on the topic. The next workshop is scheduled for 20 and 21 November.



At Simpang Ampat, Seberang Perai Selatan

A newly formed women's committee from Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (JKKK) Simpang Ampat, Seberang Perai Selatan invited WCC to give a talk to their residents on the topic of *Children's Personal Safety* on 31 July. It was officiated by YB Liew Zhi Jian and the event was covered in the Kwang Wah Jit Poh Chinese press.

The committee was concerned about the numerous reports of child sexual abuse in the newspapers and felt they should take a proactive role by reaching out to the community. They promoted the talk press announcement and leafleting in schools, markets, and residential areas. 100 participants, including parents and young children, attended the talk.

Annie Yeap conducted the talk at the residents' association hall assisted by Liz Tan, our intern from Monash University. Topics covered included the definition of sexual abuse, types of child abuse, the consequences of abuse and parents' roles in dealing with child sexual abuse. The talk, which lasted one and half hours, was well received especially by the children who actively participated in the question and answer session related to their personal safety.



At Tamil Primary Schools



On 25 and 26 August, PPW conducted the child sexual abuse (CSA) programme in Tamil at SRJ(T) Sungai Jawi and SRK(T) Sungai Bakap which 150 students and 74 students respectively attended. There were two separate sessions at each school as the groups were a large combination of Standard 4 and Standard 5 students.

The objective of this programme was to educate children on child sexual abuse and how to distinguish between good and bad touch, while also teaching them the appropriate responses based on the touch they received. The VCD *OK TAK OK* shown led to a lively session conducted by Jennie, PPW Project Officer. The students were attentive and responded enthusiastically during the *Nina and Her Secret* storytelling. Jennie emphasised the differences between good and bad secrets and related it to child sexual abuse. Copies of *Suara dan Suara Kecil Saya* booklets and *Roda Tindakan* were handed out.

Feedback from the schools was heartening and they look forward to other related topics in forthcoming programmes. PPW intern Addie Lim was there to observe the session.

At St Joseph Children's Home

The outreach team was at St. Joseph Children's Home on 14 August for the *Bijak Itu Selamat* (BIS) programme. Nadia Ali conducted the *OK tak OK* programme to 8 children ranging from 9 to 13 years. They were a little shy but the programme went on smoothly. Project Officer, Tasha Merican, and volunteer, Rosmawarni Roslan, observed the session. The children played the *Cat and Mouse* game to conclude and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

In another group, volunteer Meyuri Michelle conducted a storytelling session, *Nina and Her Secret* to twenty 4-10 year old children. They listened intently and responded well. This was Nadia and Meyuri's first presentation of the BIS programme.



Volunteer Experience by Meyuri Michelle



I was asked by Tasha to conduct a storytelling of "Nina and Her Secrets" to children from St. Joseph's Home, I felt nervous and afraid as it would be my first time to conduct after attending several training sessions at WCC. Surprisingly, on the day itself on 14 August everything ran smoothly. The children enjoyed themselves throughout the session and were actively engaged in the storytelling session. It was a very pleasant experience especially seeing the smiles on the children's faces. I am looking forward to being more involved with this children's programme. My special thanks to WCC committee member, Lim Chooi Leng for assisting me that day and thanks to WCC and Tasha for giving me this opportunity to apply what I have learnt.

Volunteer Training



On 17 July, WCC organised the 4th round of volunteer training with only eight volunteers. Although the group was small, they were keen to understand the *Bijak Itu Selamat* programme. Firstly, Prema explained why we should know about child sexual abuse and the child abuse prevention programme. Tasha then showed the volunteers how to use the VCD *Ok Tak Ok*, *Siri 2* and introduced the whole personal safety programme step-by-step.

The volunteers then worked in pairs to deliver the programme. Understandably, they needed more practice and were encouraged to observe a school programme being conducted. Prema spoke about handling disclosure and what we can do during and after disclosure at the close of the session.

WCC 25th Anniversary cum Fundraising Dinner

On 2 October at the Gurney Hotel, WCC celebrated its silver anniversary as well as raised funds for our future 3-storey building. It was a night of good food, great entertainment and successful fund raising of over RM388,000.

The event started off with a Red Carpet Runway where guests posed to take photos like Hollywood celebrities. There was also an ongoing silent auction with items ranging from antiques to luxury holidays.

The highlight of the night was a hilarious performance by Ms. Jo Kukathas from the Instant Café Theatre Company entitled "Sex, Money, Scandal: A Malaysian Pandemic". Her character Ms. Ribena Berry was a satirical monologue on the political situation in Malaysia which left the guests laughing in stitches.

The other performances that were equally entertaining. A song drama "Call WCC" had our members and volunteers dressed in costumes and sang in different languages, urging the harassed and abused to call WCC for help.

The grand finale of the night was an empowering dance called "Sing". WCC members, staff and volunteers carried placards with powerful messages and sang to the song. The night ended with an open floor dance.

Messages from the Guests of Honour



Datin Annie: Chairperson of Dinner Event

"WCC's silver jubilee celebration is marked with a great sense of purpose- to purchase a bigger premises so that WCC can expand further its work for abused women and children"

Lalitha Menon: WCC President

"What makes WCC tick is our people. At the heart of WCC is a core of spirited women (members, volunteers and staff) who are committed to the cause of combating violence against women and children."



YB Lydia Ong Kok Fooi: EXCO for Women, Family and Community Development, Penang

"The State Government fully recognises WCC's immense contribution to society as it observes how WCC has worked tirelessly with local communities, schools and governmental agencies to come to the rescue victims of abuse and violence..."



Highlights



The VIPs, staff, members and the young enthusiastic volunteers posing at the Red Carpet



WCC best sale persons at souvenir and silent auction booth



Friends having great time catching up

of the event



Dinner guests enjoying a sumptuous 8 course dinner and reconnecting with old friends.



Performances by our very own members and volunteers - "Call WCC"



Presenting Ms. Ribena Berry and Cicak Man



Grand finale dance of the night with powerful placards messages

PARTICIPATION

Counselling Course

The Penang Counselling Group, a coalition of seven NGOs including WCC, annually conducts a counselling course every Sunday from June to September to train attendees on key aspects of counselling. Participants are taught the ethics of a para-counsellor, counselling theories and models such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Existential Counselling etc. They also learn how to handle clients who face a variety of problems.

WCC staff, Annie presented a session on *Gender* to the 32 trainees. Annie highlighted the stereotypical expectations arising from socialisation, influence from media, friends, education and our society's perception of the sexes.

WCC also encourages new staff and volunteers to attend this three months course to equip them with counselling skills. This year, staff Mangles and Jennie, volunteers Dharman Bal, Rubavathy, Vivien Lee and Oon Lay Wah attended. They learnt that counselling was not about the counsellor solving the client's problem, but empowering the client to see her problem(s) from a different perspective and finding her own solution.



Rights of the Child Convention

On 24-25 August, WCC was invited to attend the above consultation organised by the Steering Committee of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) NGO Coalition with support from UNICEF at Naza Tallya Hotel.

The aim of this consultation was to gather how NGOs can participate in the CRC reporting process to review children's rights in Malaysia. It also aimed to identify the issues and gaps to be incorporated in the CRC Alternative Report with regards to Malaysia realisation of children's rights. The facilitators and speakers include Manai Liana, Madeline Yong and Dr Judith Ennew.

Participants went through each of the CRC Articles in great depth. At the end of the session, participants were given mock cheques that they should make it out to the charity and branch they considered the most deserving. Although the meeting was attended by fewer than 20 representatives from NGOs, children's homes, and learning centres, they nevertheless learnt the importance of the Articles why they should be studied more closely. The consultation also provided an opportunity for the participants to provide input to the writing of the shadow report. Tasha represented WCC at the consultation.



Seminar "Kemelum Remaja: Pembuangan Bayi"

Sejak kebelakangan ini, masalah pembuangan bayi merupakan satu isu serius yang berlaku dalam masyarakat kita. Justeru itu, Persatuan Titian Kasih dengan kerjasama Belia Negeri Pulau Pinang dan Rakan Pengguna Daerah Timur Laut telah menganjurkan Seminar "Kemelum Remaja Masa Kini- Pembuangan Bayi" pada 4 Julai di Hotel Naza Tallya. Sukarelawan WCC, Rosmawarni Roslan dan Norliza Bahari mewakili WCC untuk menghadiri seminar ini.

Ceramah pertama oleh Dr. Hajah Hazariah, Pegawai Perubatan LPPKN bertajuk "Pergaulan Bebas" mengulas tentang perubahan hormon remaja dari umur 8 hingga 19 tahun. Ceramah beliau juga merangkumi informasi mengenai cara remaja menangani perubahan hormon, pengawalan emosi dan agensi-agensi di mana para remaja boleh merujuk dan mendapatkan bantuan. Penceramah menggalakkan para remaja dan ibubapa supaya bekerjasama memberi perhatian tentang perubahan emosi dan fizikal yang dialami oleh remaja agar remaja itu lebih peka tentang perubahan seksual mereka.

Ceramah seterusnya oleh Ustaz Abdullah Khairi bertajuk "Gelora Nafsu Remaja" bermula dengan video klip mengenai aktiviti remaja seperti lepak, rempit, cara sebatan terhadap perogol dan lain-lain lagi gejala sosial remaja masa kini. Ustaz Abdullah juga menekankan kepentingan hubungan kekeluargaan dan berharap agar ibu bapa sendiri memberi teladan yang baik kepada anak-anak. Beliau juga menyeru para peserta supaya mengingati kebesaran Allah agar mereka dapat membuat keputusan yang betul dalam hidup mereka.

Lebih kurang 200 peserta yang hadir pada hari itu berasa puas hati dan sukarelawan WCC berasa mereka banyak mendapat pengetahuan baru daripada penceramah jemputan.

WCC Promo Gang in action

Little Penang Street Market



WCC's Promo Gang has been busy organising a series of road show in various shopping outlets to promote both WCC services and its 25th anniversary celebrations.

Our first road show at Little Penang Street Market (LPSM) was decorated lavishly with purple and white balloons on 25 July which prompted shoppers to take a closer look at our booth. Volunteers took turns to walk around the Market distributing pamphlets and balloons while others promoted our services and sold souvenirs of t-shirts, pens and bags at the booth.



We also had a great time with our "Keganasan Bukan Budaya Kita" jigsaw puzzle game. It was heartwarming to watch parents and their young children paired up to work on the puzzle. We took the opportunity to make a short announcement on WCC's services while waiting for the winners to receive their prizes.

Through the hard work of members and volunteers, we raised RM620 from sales and a further RM291 in donations. Many thanks to volunteers Siew Eng and her children, Su Yin, Meyuri, Rosalind, Lalitha, Mariam, Addie, Suhu, Carly, Annie and Sook Foong for their help and bringing fun and laughter to the group.

Our second promotion was equally exciting. New volunteers, Dhanen Mahes, Julia Tan and Ng See Yuen joined us when we made our second appearance at LPSM on 29 August. Although the crowd was smaller, we still made sales and distributed pamphlets and balloons. Lalitha and Suhu dropped by in the afternoon to help.



Prangin Mall, Penang International Youth Day



On 25 September, WCC ran a booth at Prangin Mall to promote our services during Penang International Youth Day. The event, organised by Persatuan Belia Graduan Pulau Pinang was well attended and WCC's booth was busy fielding visitors. We made sales of more than RM200 and also collected RM60 in donations during the two hours we were there.

Our heartfelt thanks to our members and volunteers specially Rosalind Yogambaran, Yeo Foo Tee, Tang Mooi Fang, Ong Sze Linn, Sui Ching, Rachel, Sudandara and staff Annie and Tasha who also helped.

ADVOCACY

NGO Report on sexual abuse on Penan women

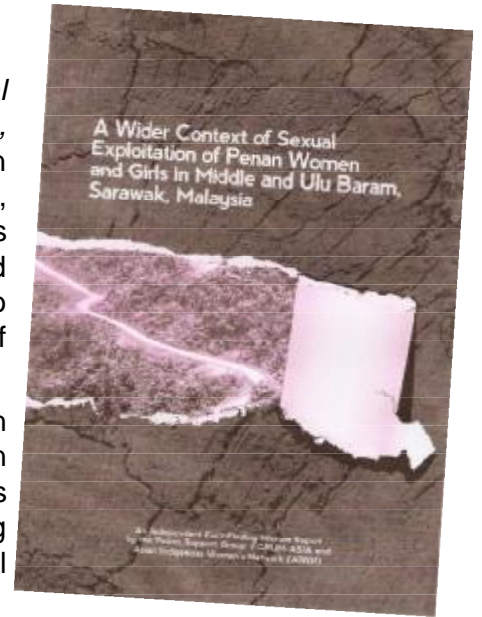
6 July saw the launch of the report *A Wider Context Of Sexual Exploitation Of Penan Women And Girls In Middle And Ulu Baram, Sarawak, Malaysia*. The report is the result of a fact-finding mission initiated by the Penan Support Group (PSG), a coalition of 36 NGOs, with the joint efforts of FORUM-ASIA and the Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN). The mission's objective was to examine and document the incidences of rape, sexual abuse, and exploitation and to deliver new evidence corroborating the allegations of sexual abuse of Penan girls and women in Middle and Ulu Baram by loggers.

The PSG fact-finding mission visited three Penan and one Kenyah community, as well as listened to evidence from thirteen Penan communities. The mission uncovered 7 previously undocumented cases of sexual abuse all pointing to a systemic pattern of violence, including threats, harassment, abduction, rape, physical assault, emotional abuse, coercion into marriage, and desertion upon pregnancy.

In the seven cases documented – all of which involved logging company workers - five involved women who were deserted once they became pregnant. The report revealed that loggers attempted to coerce or cheat young Penan girls into sexual relationships by promising to marry them, and lying to the girls that the loggers were unmarried. A number were raped before they were forced to “marry” the loggers, resulting in the victims being brought to the camps for further sexual abuse and continued rape. Copies of this report are available from WCC and SUARAM.

As expected, the response from various government officials has been to discredit the findings. PSG responded in a letter to the editor on 15 July which was published in The Nutgraph after which certain members of the fact-finding mission were required to provide statements to the police.

SUHAKAM agreed to set up a subcommittee on indigenous peoples' issues as a result of a meeting with PSG on 14 July.



Reproductive and Social Health Education

WCC, alongside other individuals and NGOs nationwide, have been involved in the formulation of the sex education curriculum. WCC has been presenting its material to the Education, Health and Women, Family and Community Development Ministries over the years and was recently invited to attend a roundtable on Reproductive and Social Health Education organised by the Curriculum Development Division of the Ministry of Education, chaired by the Director General of Education, Tan Sri Dato Haji Alimuddin Bin Haji Mohd Dom, on 24 August at Putrajaya.

The terminology 'sex education' is being phased out and will be replaced with 'Reproductive and Social Health Education'. Reproductive and Social Health Education will not be taught as a separate subject but incorporated into the existing health education subject. The national guidelines produced will cover six topics: human development; relationships; marriage and family; self esteem; health and sexual behaviour; society and culture.



Prema Devaraj, WCC Programme Director, who attended this meeting stressed the importance of sex education, WCC's experiences in this field over 10 years, the urgency of starting early, as well as the need for quality education and trained facilitators.

Participants representing both government and non governmental agencies were supportive of the guidelines and looked forward to its implementation. Prema also passed on our material to the DG of Education as well as the new Director of Curriculum Development Division.

Kempen Rakyat Pulau Pinang: Stop Sexual Crimes Against Children

WCC is part of a coalition of community groups and NGOs called Kempen Rakyat concerned with the increasing number of sexual crimes against children and determined to put a stop to these abuses. Headed by YB Chong Eng, MP for Bukit Mertajam, this coalition met twice, on 3 and 24 September, at the Caring Society Complex and is in the process of preparing a one-year campaign. Prema Devaraj, WCC Programme Director, has been involved in the planning. Apart from supplying materials for the launch (scheduled on Saturday 9 October), WCC is also committed to conducting training for people who wish to speak on the issue.

The campaign aims to:

- Raise public awareness about sexual crimes against children and the related issues
- Understand the Child Act (2001) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Learn to identify and support child victims and their families
- Empower parents, teachers, and care providers to teach personal safety
- Help plan better policies and programmes to protect children from sexual crimes
- Advocate for better support and attainable justice for victims

The campaign intends to work with all stakeholders including the state and federal agencies (Police, Welfare, Hospitals, Education Department), children's homes, individuals (parents, teachers), and members of the public to unite in a campaign that will work towards an end to sexual crimes against children. There are currently 22 groups in the coalition and there are also plans to get on board 1000 groups. The secretariat office is based at the Penang Chinese Town Hall.



Gender mainstreaming: justice for all



Gender Mainstreaming: Justice for All was an exciting conference organised by the Society for Good Governance and Gender Equality (3Gs) at the Paradise Sandy Beach Resort, Penang from 31 July to 1 August. 3Gs evolved from the Gender Equality Subcommittee of the Penang State Committee on Women, Family and Community Development to bring about transformation on gender and social justice in society by implementing gender mainstreaming policies and engaging in good governance principles.

The conference aims included deliberating issues and concerns that women face in trying to achieve higher levels of participation in key sectors of society, discussing the extent to which gender mainstreaming has been utilised towards the betterment and empowerment of Malaysian women and proposing to the Penang State government policies, strategies and programmes for the empowerment of women in the context of good governance.

WCC staff and volunteers supported 3Gs by playing key roles in conference planning and implementation. They helped with registration, chaired workshop sessions, delivered comments and helped draft the 3Gs declaration. Conference papers and the 3Gs declaration can be obtained from the website www.3gspenang.wordpress.com and a comprehensive write up of the conference is available in Aliran Monthly Vol 30:7.

Penang council consultative forum meeting

WCC committee member, Chin Khuan Sui represented WCC to attend the Penang Council Consultative Forum meeting on 9 August at the Caring Society Complex.

The agenda for the day covered issues on the heritage development and the guidelines of swiftlet breeding in Penang. However, during the matter arising session, Khuan Sui took the opportunity to raise up the alleged rape case of a four-year-old girl in a kindergarten in Jelutong which took place in 2008. She raised whether there are any guideline for the Welfare Department to put on hold any application for care centres which have records of crimes against children (or in the process of a court trial on crimes against children). WCC have been assisting the victim's family throughout the court procedure and arranged for the watching brief to assist the family on legal matters. The case is still on-going.

Local & International Internship

I am Addie Lim, psychology student from University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), who interned at PPW last May to August. Having listened to the internship experiences of my seniors, I stumbled upon WCC's website and never imagined my application to do my internship with them would be such a huge changing experience.

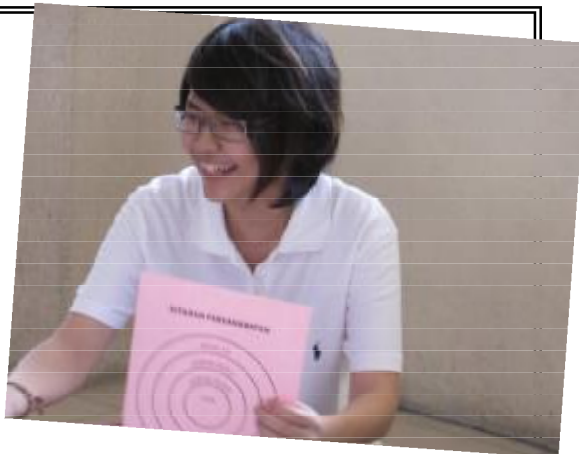
On my first day, I was surprised by the problems faced by the women who came to PPW. Over the following few weeks, I busied myself reading the books and pamphlets at PPW so that I could answer the clients' simpler questions. The rest of the training experience was followed by administrative tasks, counselling experiences, case sharing, outreach programmes and much, much more.

Internship in PPW and WCC was an eye-opener. The organisation not only helps women by providing counselling but also organises seminars, talks, training, networks with other service providers, as well as offers shelter to women and children in crisis.

I was most impressed by WCC and PPW's attitude towards people, greeting people with open arms, treating everyone equally, regardless of age, experience, or race. I was made very welcome and the staff treated me like a full-time member. In addition to my enthusiasm in counselling, I will bring this spirit back to university to continue my studies.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff in WCC and PPW for taking the time to share their expertise and knowledge with me so generously. A special thanks to Swee li, my mentor, for the guidance and supervision during my internship with PPW. I appreciated her time and patience answering my questions and demonstrating her confidence in me by allowing me to handle interesting tasks. My gratitude also extends to Jennie, and volunteer and WCC staff for all their support, guidance and encouragement during my time with them.

WCC is undoubtedly a Women's Centre for Change for people in crisis especially women and children, but as an intern, WCC is a Wonderful, Constructive and Chirpiest place to intern and learn. I really had a remarkable Internship experience - thank you again.



WCC was happy to accept Soo Hoo Pei Ying (Suhu) a psychology student from UTAR interning with us from May to August. Her involvement with WCC included observing the counselling sessions and assisting in school outreach programmes. Suhu is very creative that she produces a few posters for the counselling room and assisted with the updating of the WCC info directory.

WCC also had two international interns, Carly Owens from New York and Julianne Yujing Gu from Canada.

Carly is currently enrolled in a master's programme of Public Administration concentrating in International Relations and women's studies. From June to August, she helped with the drafting of policy resolutions for gender equality and women's rights in Penang and also assisted in the WCC 25th anniversary preparation



Julianne, a law student from the University of Toronto interned with WCC for a month in August. Julianne's internship covered a comparative research on sexual victim's support programmes in several countries. This research is part of WCC project to support victims of sexual crime in court trial.

We have great time together with all our interns and WCC wish them all the best in their future undertakings.

LETTER TO THE PRESS

Child sexual abuse: Death's not the answer

Monday, August 9th, 2010, The Malay Mail Online



THE news of an alleged rape of a 10-year-old in a school van (*pic*) has enraged the public who responded vociferously with calls for stiffer punishments for child rapists, including the death penalty.

The Women's Centre for Change (WCC), Penang, however, strongly cautions against it being imposed for child rape despite the heinous nature of the crime. Such a punishment would only serve to further silence the victim, especially if the perpetrator was a family member. Currently, the maximum sentence for child rape is 30 years with whipping and should serve as a stern punitive sentence.

The WCC urges the government to look into several important areas that need immediate attention. One of them involves improving the criminal justice system as the conviction rate for sexual crimes is abysmally low.

WCC's research into 439 sexual crime cases in subordinate courts in Penang between 2000 and 2004 showed that 45 per cent of the cases resulted in verdicts of a discharge not amounting to acquittal. Of the cases that went to full trial, the conviction rate was only four per cent! What this means is that a majority of alleged perpetrators are set free.

Poor investigation and evidence collection, and need for stringent corroboration; a high burden of proof, more so when the victim is a child of tender age; and prosecution weaknesses, among others, make it very difficult to achieve a conviction unless the alleged perpetrator pleads guilty.

While recognising the rights of the accused to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, the current system makes obtaining justice an excruciatingly painful experience for both the victims and their families. For example, in a case involving a four-year-old allegedly raped by a kindergarten assistant, it took two years for the suspect just to be charged in court.

Another issue is raising awareness that the safety of children is the responsibility of the adults. The public must be made aware of the seriousness of child sexual abuse. It can happen anywhere, at anytime and by anyone. Sexual predators will gain access to children whenever opportunities arise. People need to be made aware of the importance of looking out for and listening to children, be it a direct or indirect message, that something is not right.

While a child's safety is the responsibility of the adult, the former still needs to be taught personal safety skills. The WCC has long been promoting the need to incorporate personal safety lessons into the school curriculum. Empowering the child would include not just saying 'no' to sexual abuse but telling someone when it happens and not keeping it a secret. Often, children are too scared to tell or are afraid that they might be disbelieved or blamed.

The need to create a professional and effective network for child protection in the community is also vital. There must be sufficient resource allocation not only for an adequate number of service providers from the hospitals, welfare services and police, to name a few, in the community but for their training to ensure a sensitive and effective approach to handling child sexual abuse cases.

A lot needs to be done and can be done in implementation and enforcement. Let us channel this outrage into concrete actions for the protection of our children. Rather than call for a harsher penalty, the WCC calls for an improvement in the criminal justice system, the implementation of a public awareness campaign and the existence of an effective child protection network in the community.

Prema Devaraj
Programme Director
Women's Centre for Change, Penang